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Oct. 6, 2014

University launches 'Engaged Cornell' with \$50 million gift

Engaged Cornell – a groundbreaking, \$150 million, 10-year initiative to establish community engagement and real-world learning experiences as the hallmark of the Cornell undergraduate experience – was launched on campus today (Oct. 6). A goal of the initiative is to empower Cornell students to become active citizens and to tackle critical challenges by participating in hands-on, practical learning experiences in communities at home and around the world.

This transformational initiative is being established with a \$50 million gift from the Einhorn Family Charitable Trust, whose mission is “to help people get along better.” David Einhorn and Cheryl Strauss Einhorn, both members of Cornell Class of 1991, head the Trust.

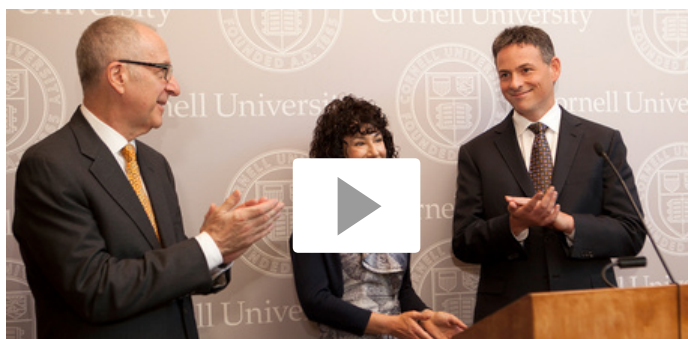
“As the university prepares to celebrate our sesquicentennial, I am deeply grateful for this far-reaching investment in public engagement – an enduring priority at Cornell since its founding,” said President David J. Skorton. “Public engagement has thrived throughout the university in part because of the sustained enthusiasm from our community of scholars and the increasing need and demand. It enriches the intellectual, social and professional lives of our students, faculty and staff.”

“This exciting new initiative speaks to the creativity and vision inherent in the university’s mission,” said Cornell President-elect Elizabeth Garrett. “The Einhorns’ dedication to transforming public engagement on this campus and around the world is truly inspiring.”



Robert Barker/University Photography

President David Skorton, Cheryl Strauss Einhorn and David Einhorn celebrate the launch of the Engaged Cornell initiative, Oct. 6 at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art.



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Watch video of the announcement.

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“David and I are thrilled to partner with Cornell to educate and empower faculty and students to have important learning opportunities beyond the classroom,” said Cheryl Einhorn, a journalist and adjunct faculty member at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. “Engaged Cornell will enable students to build relationships with people in different places and from different backgrounds while affecting real change.”

David Einhorn, founder and president of Greenlight Capital, added: “Engaged Cornell will institutionalize public service as a cornerstone of every Cornellian’s educational experience, a critical step toward recognizing that until we have the skills to work together, we won’t be able to effectively tackle the world’s greatest challenges.”

Engaged Cornell will create a new model and direction for higher education – one in which public engagement is deeply ingrained, fully institutionalized and effectively taught and implemented. Through this initiative, students graduating from Cornell will enter the world as educated global citizens who practice respect and empathy; seek collaboration, cooperation and creativity; embrace differences and diversity in all aspects of their personal, professional and civic lives; and are dedicated to working together to help solve some of the world’s most intractable problems.

“The scale, commitment and comprehensive nature of Engaged Cornell is visionary,” said Judith Appleton, Cornell’s vice provost responsible for land-grant affairs, who will lead the Engaged Cornell initiative. “It will allow us to collaborate with, and learn from, many more communities in New York, across the country and around the world.”

Appleton’s office will strengthen engagement resources throughout the university to increase access and impact, and design curricula that will be aligned with departmental, college and universitywide engaged learning goals and be tailored for each major and minor. To make this happen, Engaged Cornell will administer competitive grants at the departmental level, promote the creation of introductory and advanced courses, and support a leadership program open to all students. The overarching goal is to support students in becoming engaged citizens of the world.

Vice President for Student and Academic Services Susan Murphy ’73, Ph.D. ’94, emphasized the reach of the initiative in providing students with opportunities to learn through engagement with communities – local and global. “From volunteer activities to intellectual

Engaged Cornell at a glance

Engaged Cornell’s collaborative and integrative goals by 2025 are to:

- elevate student participation in high-quality community engagement to 100 percent;
- enable academic departments across Cornell’s colleges and professional schools to offer community-engaged learning courses across all disciplines, at both the introductory and advanced levels;
- develop and support hundreds of new community-university partnerships around the world;
- prepare faculty members in all departments and disciplines in community-engaged research and teaching;
- establish universitywide learning outcomes to instill shared values across Cornell curricula, student life and campus culture;
- launch a new engaged-learning leadership development program, available to all students across colleges, Leadership for the Greater Good, where student exemplars who successfully complete the program will receive special recognition upon graduation;
- recognize faculty who excel in community-engaged teaching and research;
- provide official, accurate and unbiased information and analysis for outcomes assessment, to support continuous improvement, and to share with other higher education institutions;
- position Cornell as a recognized educational leader in community engagement; and

engagement to the pursuit of careers that benefit others, students' experiences and outcomes will be transformed. Engaged

- be a major reason why faculty and students choose Cornell.

Cornell will enhance and extend programs beyond the classroom that nurture empathy, initiative, cooperation, self-reflection and compassion," she said.

"Engaged Cornell will directly stimulate scholarship, research and teaching," said Laura Brown, senior vice provost for undergraduate education. "We will challenge our faculty and students to explore engagement in their disciplines in ways that are both rigorous and creative."

"As our faculty and students participate in this initiative, they will develop vital partnerships with each other and with communities to explore ideas and to solve complex problems," said Provost Kent Fuchs. "As Cornell raises the standard for public engagement, the university will play a leading and collaborative role among institutions of higher learning."

"Public engagement has been described as integral to Cornell, but we can't take it for granted as a birthright," said Robert S. Harrison, chair of the Cornell Board of Trustees and chief executive officer of the Clinton Global Initiative. "We must strive to realize its promise year after year. The Einhorn Family Charitable Trust has made an incredible investment toward this aspiration, and I am confident that the university's many champions will meet the challenge of raising \$100 million in additional philanthropy to empower Engaged Cornell fully."